



# The Lord Reigneth.

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## A SERMON

PREACHED IN

LLOYD'S CHURCH, SUSSEX COUNTY, VA.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 1863,

BY

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# THE DIVINE RULE.

A SERMON, preached at Lloyd's Church, Sussex Circuit, Va., on Sunday, August 16th, 1863, by Rev. I. R. FINLEY, D.D., and published at the request of the Congregation.

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“THE LORD reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.”—PSALM xcvi. 1, 2.

The doctrine of Divine Rule in the earth is one fraught with interest and replete with comfort to the right-minded and the true-hearted. There are, however, not a few persons, who form hasty and crude notions of this doctrine, and who, therefore, while they speak flippantly about it in seasons of sunshine, nevertheless fail, in the hour of pressure and of trial, to derive from it that sufficient support which correct views of it are so eminently calculated to afford. The attentive and prayerful consideration of this subject—at all times important and profitable—is rendered peculiarly so by the condition of our beloved country; and it is in view of the fitness of the topic to the times in which we are, that I affectionately ask of my hearers, on this occasion, such a consideration of it.

I propose, as briefly as may be, to consider the Divine Rule, or Government, in human affairs,

I. As a Great Fact, declared in the Scriptures of Divine inspiration;

II. With regard to the characteristics of its dispensation; and

III. With reference to the effect which the belief of this doctrine should have upon those who entertain it.

I. Then: *That the Lord rules in the earth is a Great Fact, revealed in the Holy Scriptures.* "The LORD reigneth." The LORD—YEHOVAH, ADONAI, ELOHIM, GOD—He who is self-existent, possessing eternal being, unlimited power, unerring wisdom, and unfailing goodness. EL SHADDAI—God All-Sufficient—the Creator, Provider, Supporter, Director, Redeemer, Judge. "The LORD reigneth."

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all. (1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12) The kingdom is the Lord's, and he is governor among the nations. (Psalm xxii. 28) God is the king of all the earth. (xlvii. 7) Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." (cxlv. 13)

Such is the explicit statement of this *Great Fact* in the Holy Witness—a fact so clearly revealed that Atheism may blush to say, "There is no God;" and Infidelity may not contemptuously exclaim, "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" while those that fear the Lord, and work righteousness, may joyfully cry out, "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law giver, the Lord is our king, he will save us."

This great fact is not contrary to right reason, but, when revealed to it, secures, as it challenges, both the credence and approval of it. He who created all things must of necessity uphold and govern all things. He who possesses all excellence cannot be indifferent to the circumstances, wants, happiness and destiny of his dependent creatures. The dominion of God over his creatures cannot be renounced by him. "It is so intrinsic and connatural to him, so inlaid in the nature of God, that he cannot strip himself of it, nor of the exercise of it, while a creature remains. It is preserved by him, for it could not subsist of itself; it is governed by him, it could not

else answer its end. It is impossible there can be a creature which has not God for its Lord." What is thus manifestly true as to the individual, must be also true as to the aggregation of individuals into masses or communities, under visible governments, however diverse they may be in their nature and construction; since the relations subsisting between the individual and his Creator, Preserver and Ruler are not changed by the interposition of any form of human government.

Indeed, the Divine Rule among men is chiefly carried on by subordinate visible agencies and instrumentalities. Not only are the angels of heaven his "hosts"—"ministers that do the pleasure of the Lord of Hosts"—but "He calls the stars by name, appoints them to their respective places, and subordinates them to the purposes of his government. He wills it, and the stars fight against Sisera. He ordains it, and the sun stands still that Joshua may triumph gloriously. Hail, rain, thunder and lightning; earthquake, plague, pestilence, famine and war; the air, the earth, the sea; these all do his bidding. "He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he canseth his wind to blow, and the waters flow." The locust, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm are his servants, going forth at his command, "climbing the walls, marching, not breaking their ranks" "By him kings reign, and princes decree justice. By him princes rule, and nobles, over all the judges of the earth. (Prov. viii. 15, 16) He changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that have no understanding. (Daniel ii. 21.) He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. (Psalm xli. 9) Sing praises to God, sing praises, for God is the king of all the earth."

We come, II. To consider *the Divine Rule in the earth with regard to the characteristics of its administration.* "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

These words present the Divine administration to us in two aspects: 1st, that of obscurity; and 2d, that of the highest excellence.

That the Divine Ruler should enthrone himself in "clouds of darkness" while

"He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works his sovereign will,"

is not wonderful, nor does it detract from the excellence of his government. It is not wonderful, when it is remembered that man is incapable of comprehending fully even the most common phenomena of nature, the handiwork of God ever present to his notice. How, then, shall he find out the Almighty unto perfection? The human mind occupies too low a standpoint, and possesses too limited a range of vision, to discover the manifold links which connect human events with human destiny; stretching, perhaps, not only through days and months, but through years and generations; and accomplishing, not the crude plans of human devising, but the sublime ends of Him whose "ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts, as the heavens are higher than the earth."

The permission of evil in this sin-cursed earth; the inequality of individual and social position; the apparent success of the wicked, and failure on the part of the righteous; the mysteries attendant upon the judgments of the Lord in the world, in the past and in the present, as fire and sword, plague, pestilence and famine; these all are problems, the solution of which is not to be arrived at with the means at hand in this present state of being. All must of necessity be in obscurity beneath the cloud which hangs suspended on the mountain's side. We must surmount the cloud if we would

emerge from the inferior darkness and enter the superior brightness. In the world beyond

“There shall the desolate heart regain its own!  
There the oppressed shall stand before the throne!  
There, when the tangled web is all explained,  
Wrong suffered, pain inflicted, grief disdained,  
Man’s proud, mistaken judgments and false scorn  
Shall melt, like mists before the uprising morn,  
And holy truth stand forth, serenely bright,  
In the rich flood of God’s eternal light.”

Nor is it necessary, either to the perfecting of the Divine plans, or to our own happiness, that we should be able to dissipate the “clouds of darkness” that are “round about the Lord.” So far as may be necessary to his purposes, and to our co-operation in their execution, we may and do have light; beyond this, all is at present unnecessary to us, and to seek to penetrate farther is as impious as imbecile.

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, *that we may do all the words of this law.*” Duty is ours, results and reasons are God’s.

“Leave to his sovereign sway,  
To choose and to command;  
So shalt thou, wond’ring, own his way,  
How wise; how strong his hand”

Meanwhile, our encouragement is that, though “clouds and darkness are round about” the Divine Ruler, “righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne;” or, as expressed in a parallel passage in the 89th Psalm, “Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne: mercy and truth shall go before his face.”

That “the righteous Lord loveth righteousness,” is abundantly asserted in the sacred Scriptures: “Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. (Psalm v. 4.) Righteous art thou, O Lord,



and upright are thy judgments. (cxix. 137.) The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. (cxlv. 17.) God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. (Acts x. 34, 35.) Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment." (Job xxxiv. 12.)

These quotations sufficiently indicate that, while the Divine Ruler possesses infinite knowledge and wisdom, so as to be placed above all possibility of error, such is the perfection of his goodness, holiness, justice and truth, that he cannot be partial or unequal. He cannot fail in any instance to render to his every creature that which is strictly right. Thus his throne is established in righteousness and judgment. It does not militate against this declaration that the ways of God to man; on the earth, may *seem* to be unequal. It is not for the finite to scan the Infinite. Man cannot be a proper judge in the premises, since he is an interested party. His judgment cannot be infallible, for the facts are not all before him. He is a fallen being, with a corrupt nature, and he is, therefore, predisposed to say of the holy and righteous God, "The way of the Lord is not equal." Nevertheless, they that stand in His presence, "on the sea of glass, having the harps of God," continually sing, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" (Rev. xv. 2-4.)

"Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation (or establishment) of his throne."

We are now to consider the Divine Rule on earth:

III *With reference to the effect which this doctrine should have upon those who properly entertain a belief of it.* The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

And 1. *A proper faith in this doctrine will induce a spirit of gratitude and of rejoicing.* "Rejoice—be glad:—Rejoice

in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." (12th v)

Surely it should excite lively emotions of gratitude and of joy in the breast both of the dweller on the vast continent and in that of the inhabitant of the tiny islet, afloat on the bosom of the sea, that "the Lord," and not man, "reigneth;" that the Sovereign Disposer of human events is not one like unto man, capable of imperfection in knowledge, of error in judgment, or of tyranny in practice; that, while "his eye is everywhere, beholding," so that none, even the smallest or most obscure, is hidden from his observation for an instant, he is not governed by caprice, nor swayed by favor or prejudice; he cannot be bribed or bought; and his motives are wholly generous and unselfish.

It should heighten these emotions, too, to remember that the sway of this Sovereign Ruler is not mutable, as is the reign of earthly potentates, but perpetual and unchangeable, in principle and administration, in all times and in all ages, always and everywhere. The mighty empires of the Chaldeans, Medes, Persians, Greeks and Romans have passed away; but "His throne is from generation to generation" "It cannot be shaken. His sceptre, like Aaron's rod, is always green. It cannot be wrested out of his hands. None raised him to it, none, therefore, can depose him from it. It bears the same splendor in all human affairs. He is an eternal, an immortal King. As he is eternally mighty, so he is eternally sovereign; and being an eternal King, he is a King that gives not a momentary and perishing, but a durable and everlasting, life to those that obey him; a durable and eternal punishment to them that resist him."

2. *A proper faith in this doctrine will inspire trust and hope in God.*

Constituted, as we are in our present state of being, dependent one upon another, it is natural to us, in our fallen and depraved condition, to lean unduly upon the wisdom, the resources, the friendship or the affection of those about us,

forgetful that God has said, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." (Jer. xvii. 5.) In prosperity we naturally seek to establish our fortunes by forming human, and often entangling, alliances and combinations, as the builders of Babel sought by numbers and by toil to place themselves beyond the reach of another flood, unmindful of the bow of promise which spanned the heavens, and whose beauty and brightness failed to win their trust in Jehovah, whose sign and seal it was. In adversity we are prone to look to human sources alone for comfort and for re-edification. In either instance we only re-chisel and make more legible, amid the ivy and the moss, the epitaph on the grave-stone of human experiences—"Vain is the help of man;" vain, in the disappointment of our hopes by its denial to our prayer when most needed; or, vain in its inability to aid us when most promptly and wisely afforded. So in times of national trouble, when the scourges of God are abroad in the land, in the devastations of fire or of flood, of plague, pestilence or famine; in the invasions of ruthless foes; or, more terribly still, in the convulsions of a fratricidal war, how prone, under such circumstances, are men and nations to "go down to Egypt for help and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! Yet the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together." (Isaiah xxxi. 1-3.)

Not so, however, with that people whose God is the Lord, and whose trust is in him—"the Lord Jehovah," in whom "is everlasting strength." Recognising the Divine Rule in the affairs of the children of men, and the great truth, that though the Lord maketh "darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him dark waters and thick clouds of the

skies," yet his administration is established in "righteousness and judgment," they repose in him a sublime trust, and inspired by a hope that "maketh not ashamed," they go forth undaunted in the pathway of duty, of honor, of piety and of rectitude, bravely enduring, nobly achieving, confidently relying; however deficient may be native resources, however reluctant or wholly withheld may be human aid, however trying may be occasional or even frequent reverses and disappointments, the utterance of faith and hope being all the while, "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. Save Lord, let the King hear us when we call."

"Some in chariots, some in horses,  
We in God Jehovah, trust;  
And, while He our sure resource is;  
They are fallen in the dust:  
Save, Jehovah, save and hear us,  
King of glory, King of might;  
When we call, be ever near us,—  
Ever for thy servants fight."

3. *A proper faith in this doctrine will inspire reverence for Deity, and obedience to him.*

The Divine Ruler "is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. To whom, then, will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working—glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders—gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger, and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. He preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he destroy. Shall not the ends of the earth fear him?" "Receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with

reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 28, 29.)

In times of public calamity, such as those in which we live, the reverence for the Deity and obedience to him, which are now under consideration, have manifold directions in which they may operate. To some of these your attention will be turned for a moment or two.

For nearly three years a fearful fratricidal war has been in progress on this continent, in which, as a nation asserting our right to self-government, and in spite of every honorable effort on our part to avoid it, we have been compelled to act as one of the great contending parties. Time has rolled on, and with one of the truest patriots and most eminent statesmen that ever filled the seat of the Chief Magistracy in any nation, presiding at the helm of our affairs; with the noblest army that ever faced a foe, under the conduct of as brave and competent officers as ever led a valiant army to battle; with a cause most clearly and irrefragably just and holy; with means and appliances of war now abundant in our midst, and resources from which to derive fresh supplies as these may become exhausted; with a people more united than, perhaps, any nation ever was before, in a struggle for their lives and liberties; and after gaining victory upon victory over the enemy—such victories as have secured for us, as a nation, the respect and admiration of the kingdoms and peoples of the earth—we are still invaded and beleaguered; large portions of our fairest and most productive territory have been overrun and laid waste, and are in possession of the cruel foe, who has driven forth aged sons and matrons, women and helpless infants, from their once happy homes, refugees in exile, and full often in penury and pain; churches have been and are desecrated to the vilest purposes; our great marts of commerce in the hands of the enemy, or blockaded and besieged; cries of mourning, and the wailings of orphans and widows are heard, like the sad notes of the whippoorwill, all over the land; and, meanwhile, the elements are gathering blackness for a coming and

perhaps more dreadful and devastating storm than has as yet, in these three awful years of horrid war, burst upon us. The enemy, meantime, has bankrupted his treasury; has had at least a million of his citizens slain or disabled in the fight; has dissension and disaffection in his counsels and among his people; is compelled to enforce his conscriptions at the point of the bayonet, and by quartering armies in his capital cities; has his commerce exposed to the guns of our infant but noble navy, millions of dollars worth of the property of his merchants having been already destroyed or confiscated; scarce a hamlet or cottage of his domain but mourns a slain father, husband, or brother; his relations with foreign powers in the most critical condition; his armies, at home, held in check by our own, in many instances inferior in numbers, while his soldiery and officers are demoralized and incapable of noble deeds of daring; outbreaks, and scenes of violence perpetrated in his cities, and a general uprising of the whole Northern population, to throw off the vile yoke of a detested tyranny, alone suppressed by the strong arm of a relentless military oligarchy; the war, meanwhile, being carried on upon us with every cruelty that diabolic malignity could invent or rejoice in, and in contravention of all the established rules and usages received and acted upon by Christian nations. Yet, he tires not. His malevolence is not satisfied, his *thirst* for our blood and treasure not satisfied. His cruelties *cease* not. Our tears yet flow, our cry still pierces the ear of Heaven. Our breasts are still bared to the shock of battle. Does the Lord reign? Are "righteousness and judgment the habitation of his throne?" Will Infidelity respond in the mocking tones of Elijah to the priests of Baal, "Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened?" Methinks I hear the awful accents of Deity himself as he replies to these skeptical ravings:

"When the host goeth forth against thine enemies then keep thee from every wicked thing. There is an accursed

thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you—the Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight. Thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greatly gained of thy neighbors by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord God. Behold, therefore, I have smitten my hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made. Forasmuch, therefore, as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. The powers that be are ordained of God. Thou shalt not revile the judges, nor curse the ruler of thy people. The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished; but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise government: presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”

Are these the utterances of the Lord that reigneth, and do they point out the capital sins of the people of this Southern Confederacy? Then how shall we hope to succeed in this war against an invading foe, while *He* “hath a controversy with” us? “Who hath hardened himself against the Lord, and hath prospered? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?” (Job xl. 9.) Surely it is alike the dictate of sound reason and of true piety to repent individually and nationally of our sins and transgressions; to evince the sincerity of our repentance by instant and complete obedience to the Divine Ruler, and by lives of righteousness and judgment. We gain nothing, we imperil everything by delay. “Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the

Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hosea vi. 1-3.)

Finally, *a proper faith in this doctrine will inspire a spirit of patient waiting for the end.*

"Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (Jas v. 10, 11.)

It is very natural, under the pressure of sore trial and affliction, of any sort, to be restless and impatient of the end. Weary weeks and months or years roll on, and yet "the end is not." It is not to be wondered at if the cry be extorted, "How long, O Lord, how long?" But wherefore "take thought for the morrow, when by doing so we cannot change the current of events, nor "add one cubit unto our stature?" We cannot penetrate the designs of the Almighty. We cannot even fully understand the plans and modes of his choice and of his operation. Impatience only impairs the energies of the soul, and incapacitates for the performance of duty. Its parentage is in unbelief, its fruitage is bitterness. "The Lord reigneth. Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

"Wisdom, the antidote of sad despair,  
Makes sharp afflictions seem not as they are,  
Through patient sufferance; and doth apprehend  
Not as they seeming are, but as they end."

Meanwhile, though "by searching" we cannot "find out God"—cannot "find out the Almighty unto perfection"—still, as he has left a record of himself in the sand and in the stone of the rock-ribbed earth, so legible that he who takes the pains may decipher it, so, in the footprints of the past he has written the great principles of his government, for man's com-



forting and edification, fully capable of interpretation so far as those ends may be effected thereby. The existence of the record implies the duty of interpretation; and man will find a more profitable occupation in this than in idle repinings and in bootless murmurings. The task, however, should not be enterprised with an impertinent curiosity, but with a reverent faith and docile spirit, in order that the purposes for which the record was made may be accomplished. "Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

It is observable, then, in the perusal of this record of God's dealings with men, in the kingdoms of Providence and of Grace, that in all ages of the world, he has been wont, as a uniform practice of his government in the earth, to raise up human agencies and instrumentalities, possessing peculiar adaptations to specific ends, for the working out mediately of "his bright designs." It is also observable, that usually these have undergone a course of discipline or training preparatory to their entrance upon the work to which they were called of God; and all of this without their cognizance of the fact at the time. Instances may be found in Noah and his family, Abraham and his descendants, Moses and Aaron, Nebuchadnezzar, and Cyrus and Napoleon, and our own Washington, Luther and Calvin and Wesley. These and others have come upon the stage of action at the opportune moment, have established or assumed the control of human governments already in existence, when the world seemed to be hurried, as by the steeds of the sun, to instant destruction, and rescued them from imminent ruin; or appearing amid the profound darkness of moral night, and enabled and guided by the energy and wisdom of the Divine Ruler, have lit up the darkness and have poured Divine light and truth upon the inhabitants of the earth: in the one case building up kingdoms and dynasties for the punishment of vice and the promotion of virtue, and in the other, overturning the reign of Satan and establishing, upon the ruins, that of the Great God and our

Saviour Jesus Christ : in both, declaring the glory and showing forth the praises of "the King eternal, immortal and invisible."

Now, if these postulates be true, as I think will be admitted by the ingenuous reader of history, sacred and profane, it may be asked, without further elaboration of the statement, have we not, since the Divine Being "changes not," a clue to the interpretation of the present, at least a ray of sacred light thrown upon the destiny of our at present stricken and bleeding country, which should serve to gladden our hearts and impress most seriously every reflecting mind ? Is it true that God, the Lord, the Sovereign Ruler in the earth, thus raises up, in the successive periods of human history, agents and instruments, and disciplines and prepares them, usually, for the carrying out of the plans and purposes of his administration, selecting now an individual, then a family, and again a nation : *Where, then, is the agent or instrument now in existence and operation ?* Passing by individuals and families, *where is the nation* to which one may point, intelligently and impartially, and say in reply to this question, It is here, or it is there ? Surely, it is not to be found in heathendom : as surely, not in the lands of the Greek or Roman Church in Europe. It can hardly be expected to be found in Great Britain, where, to say nothing of fanaticism in regard to the abolition of negro slavery, and other political disabilities, amid much that is most excellent and praiseworthy, the antagonism of the English Church and of the dissenting bodies is of such a character as to paralyze all the efficient onward movement in the direction in which we are looking. Certainly we should not look for it among the peoples of South America, held as they are under priestly domination. Will any one be insane enough to look for it in that land of anarchy and tyranny—the North ? Assuredly not. Where, then, is it to be found, but in this noble sisterhood of States—the Southern Confederacy ? Where, but in a land blessed of God with national and industrial resources of the most abundant and inexhaustible

character; with a people intelligent, chivalrous and highly endowed with the capacity for self-government; with a form of government which allows the greatest rational liberty, while it enforces the proper obedience of the governed, and most fully secures their rights and happiness; with a history which, though brief, and written in the blood of her best citizens, yet is glorious, and commands the approbation and commendation of the world; so that her influence is already abroad among the nations, while yet her nationality is unrecognised by them; with a soil most productive and capable of maturing almost every growth of earth, and a climate salubrious and varied; and while thus made independent, both for self-preservation and for self-development, of the other portions of the globe, possessing two staple products which must make them, commercially, tributary to her greatness. Surely such advantages can neither be the result of accident nor without a noble destiny, if the people of these Southern Confederate States are but true to themselves and to the Bountiful Donor of "every good and every perfect gift; the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

But, the presumption becomes stronger, when we remember that "Ethiopia stretches out her hands unto God" for salvation, and that the commission comes from Heaven's High Chancery to us as a nation to christianize that dark and benighted people—a commission spurned by our enemy, and for the fulfillment of which we possess peculiar adaptations. We have accepted that commission, "assuredly gathering that the Lord has called us to preach the gospel unto them;" and are now, among other issues of this war, contending for the privilege of obeying our "God-given best." This enters largely into the present strife; and, under the discipline of war, the relations subsisting between master and slave are being placed upon a nobler and more stable basis, by the mutual discoveries of truth and duty; so that the shouts of these Southern States which shall presently announce to the

world that we are free, will, as they float over wide oceans, convey to the millions of Africa the glad exhortation: "Arise, shine; for *thy* light is come. and the glory of the Lord is risen upon *thee*." The gospel of the Son of God will be carried there by missionaries of African descent, the means of grace as enjoyed by us will be granted unto them who now "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace;" and who knows but a nation shall be born in a day?

The presumption becomes cumulative in view of the fact that the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has not been fully established in all the world, though nearly nineteen centuries have elapsed since he ascended his mediatorial throne, amid the shouts of the angelic hosts. The Church of the Living God, the grand instrument in its establishment, has been laggard in the discharge of her duty. She has drawn her "slow length along"—now working, now idle. The Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us!" unheeded by the Church, has long enough pierced the ear of the Great Head of the Church. He requires that the army of his followers shall hasten to the rescue. Infidelity and irreligion and superstition and idolatry have reigned long enough. What if God should call some highly favored people of the earth to spring forth into the forefront of his forces, to "cut short the work in righteousness," by stimulating the other Christian nations to greater self-denial, more vigorous action, and more rapid and decisive results than have yet been exhibited or achieved? What if this Southern Confederacy, with its great and manifold advantages, and its wonderful adaptations, should be *that nation*? Is there anything unreasonable in the conception of the possibility of such an occurrence? Is there not everything to favor the plausibility of such an idea? Can it be that this Southern people is being raised up and disciplined for this very end? Can it be that, through us—the din of this horrid war being over—God shall say "to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not

back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him;" and that the "great voices in Heaven shall say, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." What mind of patriot or of Christian does not expand with such a conception? what pulse does not quicken under the glowing emotion kindled by such an idea! Who does not feel ready to exclaim, "This is the Lord's doing? It is marvellous in our eyes." Who can be proud or vain-glorious? who can indulge in self-ease and inactivity? who can covet the Babylonish garment, the shekels of gold, or the shekels of silver? who can oppress the poor, or "greatly gain of his neighbors by extortion, and forget the Lord God?" who can speak evil of magistrates and rulers? who can withhold his sons or his property from carrying on this war? who can be impatient under privation, suffering, bereavement, or trial, in view of national destiny so noble—of results, far beyond national confines, so glorious?

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

